

# Origins and Functions of the Birkenau Camp

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Robert Jan van Pelt was one of the first writers to mention the importance of Auschwitz in SS plans for the colonization of the Eastern occupied territories. In van Pelt's book written in collaboration with Deborah Dwork, he stated that

*The creation of Birkenau camp, which, by the end of 1942, had become a major center for the annihilation of Europe's Jews, was directly connected to Himmler's program to transform Auschwitz into a paradigm of German settlement in the East [1].*

Van Pelt later attempted to develop this thesis with particular reference to Upper Silesia [2], but further research then documented the fact that this paradigm formed part of a much broader project, the "Generalplan Ost", the "General Plan for the East", which involved the camps of Birkenau, Lublin and Stutthof as mere manpower-collection camps, first of Soviet POWs, then of Jews. This new interpretation has been supported, in particular, by Jan Erik Schulte, author of an important article entitled "Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42" (From Labor Camps to Extermination Camps. History of the Origins of Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941-1942) [3], outlining, in particular, the early history of Birkenau camp, and the manner in which it fit into the "Generalplan Ost".

## Generalplan Ost: Introduction of Deportees from the West

Let us summarize the essential points of the plan, fitting them into a broader perspective.

In the so-called Krakow Notes, the "autobiography"/jailhouse confession attributed to Rudolf Höss, the first commandant of Auschwitz, appears the passage:

*"Before the war, the concentration camps were used to protect Germany from its internal enemies, but because of the war Himmler ordered that their main purpose now was to serve the war effort. Every possible prisoner was to become a defense plant worker; every Kommandant was to have his camp absolutely ready for this purpose. According to Himmler's orders Auschwitz was to become a tremendous prisoner defense center. His announcement during his visit in March 1941 was clear enough in this respect. The following plans for the camp spoke clearly enough: preparation of the camp for 100,000 POWs, the remodeling of the old camp for 30,000 prisoners, and the allocation for the 'Buna' [synthetic rubber] factory of 10,000 prisoners." [4].*

Schulte noted that such a statement "no longer appeared credible" [5], and he was completely right. On this visit, Himmler [in his] report drawn up on 17 March 1941 by SS-Untersturmführer Heinrich Schwarz, prisoner labor deployment head (Häftlingseinsatzführer) at Auschwitz, and addressed to the head of the Central Section I/5 of the SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten (Central Logistics and Construction Office of the SS), directed by SS-Gruppenführer Oswald Pohl, limits himself to stating as follows:

*"On 1 March 1941, at 15.30 hours, Reichsführer-SS and Head of the German Police arrived at Auschwitz. The Reichsführer-SS was very satisfied by the progress and the work done in Auschwitz concentration camp, which was recognised by Reichsführer-SS during the inspection in the company of the Inspector of Concentration Camps, SS-Oberführer Glücks, and has expressed his fullest appreciation to the camp*

*commandant, SS-Sturmbannführer Höss* ["Am 1.3.41, 15.30 Uhr traf der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im K.L. Auschwitz ein. Über den Fortschritt und die geleisteten Arbeiten im K.L. Au. die bei der Besichtigung vom Reichsführer SS im Begleitung des Inspektors der K.L. SS-Oberführer Glücks festgestellt worden sind, war der Reichsführer SS sehr befriedigt und sprach dem Kommandanten des K.L. Au. SS-Sturmbannführer Höß seine vollste Anerkennung aus"][\[6\]](#).

No mention of the construction of the Birkenau camp for 100,000 *Kriegsgefangene*, which is also a bit of a misnomer, because the POWs could only have been Soviets, but the Russian campaign did not even begin until 3 months later.

The historiography of the Auschwitz Museum, in its discussion of the origins of Birkenau camp, has remained anchored in the contradictory declarations attributed to Höss from the very outset, and as a result remains rather ambiguous. This historiography fits the origins of the camp into the presumed order to exterminate the Jews allegedly issued by Himmler to Höss in the summer of 1941, which was to have been carried out at Auschwitz, but only draws the logical consequence in an indirect manner. Franciszek Piper has in fact explicitly stated as follows:

*"In the summer of 1941, Himmler personally decided to fit the Auschwitz concentration camp into the framework of the extermination of the Jews"*[\[7\]](#).

This would imply that the planning of Birkenau camp arose from this order; on the other hand, this interpretation is in conflict with the documents, which attest that this camp was planned and built as a *Kriegsgefangenenlager*, as a POW camp. To overcome this difficulty, the same historiography, ignoring the great mass of proof to the contrary adduced by Jean-Claude Pressac, persists in affirming that the crematorium planned for the requirements of the *Kriegsgefangenenlager* was designed as a homicidal gas chamber from the very outset. This is how Piper expresses his contention:

*"After Himmler ordered the expansion of the camp during his inspection of Auschwitz in March 1941, Amt II-Bauten (Construction Office II) of the SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten drew up a preliminary plan for construction of a camp at Birkenau, intended for 125,000 POWs. With a view to accomplishment of this task, he created a Sonderbauleitung (Special Construction Administration), on 1 October 1941, for the construction of a Waffen-SS POW camp, in Auschwitz concentration camp, headed by Karl Bischoff"*[\[8\]](#).

In 1946, the Polish judge Jan Sehn, while recognizing that Birkenau camp was intended for prisoners of war, insinuated:

*"For the construction of this camp, a special section called the 'Sonderbauleitung'[\[9\]](#) was created, within the construction management. In official correspondence, it is explicitly stated that the camp which had just been constructed was intended for the 'implementation of inmate special treatment' (Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung)"[\[10\]](#).*

Since Sehn interpreted the words "special treatment" as a "code word" for the alleged mass extermination, the real reason for building Birkenau camp was thus assumed to be extermination. Piper, by contrast, states that the new crematorium (the future Crematorium II) "was designed for POWs"[\[11\]](#), which is beyond doubt. On 12 November 1941, after a telephone conversation with a representative of the Topf company, Bischoff, at that time *Bauleiter* (construction superintendent) of Auschwitz, sent the following letter to the *Rüstungskommando* (armaments command) of Weimar:

*“The Topf & Söhne company, specialists in technical combustion plants, Erfurt, has been entrusted by this office with the task of constructing a cremation installation, to be finished as quickly as possible, because of the annexation to Auschwitz concentration camp of a POW camp. The POW camp will be occupied by nearly 120,000 Russians in the very near future. Construction of the cremation installation is therefore absolutely necessary to prevent epidemics and other hazards”.*

[„Die Firma Topf & Söhne, Feuerungstechn. Anlagen, Erfurt hat von der hiesigen Dienststelle den Auftrag erhalten, schnellstens eine Verbrennungsanlage aufzubauen, da dem Konzentrationslager Auschwitz ein Kriegsgefangenenlager angegliedert wurde, das in kürzester Zeit mit ca. 120000 Russen belegt wird. Der Bau der Einäscherungsanlage ist deshalb dringend notwendig geworden um Seuchen und andere Gefahren zu verhüten“][12].

Piper, however, then adds that

*“Since the crematorium, equipped with five crematory ovens, was planned for the mass extermination of Jews, it was decided to construct at the same time a separate crematorium for the prisoners of war directly on the spot at Birkenau, which was to receive two crematory ovens with three muffles each”[13].*

Since the cost estimate of these two ovens dates back to 12 February 1942, while the first designs for the new crematorium for the Birkenau camp [14] were drawn up on 15 January [15], it is clear that, to Piper, this was planned for homicidal purposes, notwithstanding the proof to the contrary adduced by Pressac. And from the moment that the crematorium is mentioned already in the “Explanatory Report on the Preliminary Draft for the New Construction of the Prisoner-of-War Camp for the Waffen-SS. Auschwitz, Upper Silesia” (*Erläuterungsbericht zum Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S*) dated 30 October 1941 [16], in practice, even Piper comes to insinuate that the Birkenau camp was constructed in compliance with the alleged extermination order issued to Höss by Himmler in June 1941.

In reality, Himmler was thinking of something else entirely at the time.

On 24 June 1941, he ordered his best expert in the sector, *SS-Oberführer* Prof. Dr. Konrad Meyer-Hetling, to draw up the German colonization plans for the Eastern territories incorporated by Germany (particularly for the *Reichsgaue* Danzig-West Prussia and Wartheland). On 15 July, Meyer-Hetling completed a study entitled “*Generalplan Ost*” [17]. The project, in its essential outlines, had already been delineated for Poland by E. Wetzel and G. Hecht in a secret memorandum entitled “*Die Frage der Behandlung der Bevölkerung der ehemaligen polnischen Gebietes nach rassenpolitischen Gesichtspunkte*” (The Question of the Treatment of the Population of the ex-Polish Territory from the Politico-Racial Point of View). Here “the purpose of Eastern policy” was defined as follows:

*“The purpose of German policy in the new territories of the Reich should be the creation of a racially homogenous and therefore spiritually and psychologically homogenous population”[18].*

This elimination consisted in a transfer of populations, which also included exceptions which constituted “*Sonderbehandlung*”, or “Special Treatment”:

*“Sonderbehandlung of children of value from a racial point of view.*

*“A great proportion of the population strata of the non-Germanizable Polish people for national/racial motives [aus völkischen Gründen] will by contrast be expelled into the remaining Polish territory. But children of value from the racial point of view[19] are however, to be excluded from the transport and brought up in the Old Reich, in appropriate educational institutions, possibly according to the model of the ex-military orphanage in Potsdam or in a German family environment” [20].*

*“Sonderbehandlung of non-Polish minorities.*

*“As already stated, the sphere of the new territories of the Reich includes Kashubians in West Prussia, the Masurs in West and East Prussia, Wasserpölen[21] and Slonzaks in Upper Silesia. These minorities, like parts of the Kashubians and Wasserpölen, include considerable numbers of Slavicized German ethnics, on the whole have not behaved as Polish chauvinists; thus, for this reason, they are sometimes very pro-German politically. Members of the above mentioned minorities who identify themselves with the Poles must be dealt with like Polish nationalists and expelled. But the great mass of the population of these minorities should be left in their homeland and should not be subjected to any particular restrictions on their lives” [22].*

The Jews were to be transferred into the non-incorporated Polish territories (General Gouvernement):

*“The remaining Polish territory, which already contains a population of 12,700,000 persons, would thus have a population of approximately 19,300,000 persons[23]. Another approximately 800,000 Jews from the Reich (Old Reich, Ostmark [Austria], Sudetengau [Sudetenland] and the Protectorate [Bohemia and Moravia]) would be added to that total. Another 530,000 Jews would be expelled, in addition to the ex-Polish territories incorporated into the Reich” [24].*

As regards the treatment of these populations, the principle was to separate and counter-balance Jews and Poles. The Jews were, to some extent, to enjoy a somewhat less severe form of treatment:

*“To render the Jews apt for emigration, it will be advisable to provide them with better educational instruction at any rate. The Jewish political associations must be prohibited, just like the Polish ones. By contrast, the Jewish cultural associations must be tolerated a little more easily than the Polish ones. We certainly need to leave the Jews a freer hand in this regard than the Poles, since the Jews do not have a real political strength, like the Poles have their ideology of Greater Poland. But that the well-known essence of Judaism is its tendency towards business and political and economic enterprise must naturally be kept in mind at all times. The Yiddish language may be permitted in everyday life. On the other hand, it is impossible [to permit] the written Jewish language in official relations”.*

This is followed by other restrictions, relating to newspapers, names, agricultural properties, and measures to avoid population increase, such as abortion[25].

### **Tapping the Deportees for Construction Labor**

On 17 July 1941, Himmler, in his capacity as “Reichskommissar for the Consolidation of Germanism” (Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums)[26] appointed SS-Brigadeführer Odilo Globocnik, who was SS- und Polizeiführer of Lublin, “Basic SS and Police Construction Head in the New Eastern Territory” (Beauftragte für die Errichtung der SS- und Polizeistützpunkte im neuen Ostraum). In a note drawn up on 21 July 1941, point 13, Himmler ordered that the Head of the Reichsführer-SS was to

implement the chain of command by autumn “for the construction of bases for the SS and police in the new Eastern territories” [27]. As Schulte writes,

*“The other orders issued by Himmler at Lublin also make it obvious that he wished to employ the inmates for measures linked to the colonization of the East” [28].*

Himmler’s ambitious projects culminated in his secret order of 5 December 1941 on the “Employment of Concentration Camp Inmates” transmitted to the head of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Central Reich Security Office), *SS-Gruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich, to Inspector of Concentration Camps *SS-Brigadeführer* Richard Glücks, to all camp commandants and to *SS-Gruppenführer* Oswald Pohl, head of the *SS-Hauptamt Verwaltung und Wirtschaft* (SS Central Administrative and Economic Office):

*“The SS construction projects, particularly since the [outbreak of the] war, require that we undertake large-scale preparatory measures, starting immediately. In particular, this means procuring the manpower required for construction. The SS is in the unusually favorable position of being able to derive and train its manpower from among concentration camp inmates. I have therefore assigned the head of the SS-Hauptamt Verwaltung und Wirtschaft, SS-Gruppenführer Pohl, with responsibility for training the following manpower for the large-scale construction projects to be undertaken following the conclusion of peace:*

*“1) at least 5,000 stone cutters*

*“2) at least 10,000 bricklayers.*

*“When one considers that there were only 4,000 qualified stone cutters in all of Germany before the war, one can easily gauge the scope of this training work. But we need these 5,000 stone cutters, because we have already received an order from the Führer according to which the Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke GmbH, as an SS undertaking, upon the conclusion of the peace, is to supply at least 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> of granite per year for the Führer’s large-scale construction projects. This is more than the stone quarries of the Old Reich supplied before the war” [29].*

Schulte also remarks:

*“For the construction measures of the ‘Generalplan Ost’, Meyer calculated a requirement of 850,000 workers for the first five years, including 400,000 for the colonization of territories in the occupied Soviet Union. For the second five-year plan, he anticipated another 580,000 men, including 130,000 employed in the new “Ostraum” (Eastern territories)” [30].*

### **Inclusion and Exploitation of POWs with Deportees**

To obtain the necessary manpower, Himmler, in July 1941, ordered the construction of a concentration camp at Lublin, planned for 25,000-50,000 inmates not further specified. But when the initial military successes against the Soviet Union caused a great number of prisoners to fall into German hands, Himmler decided that the labor projects were to be carried out by Soviet prisoners of war and as a result ordered the creation of a *Kriegsgefangenenlager* at Lublin, the first plan for which dates back to 7 October 1941 [31].

Cognizance for the construction work was assigned to *SS-Oberführer* Hans Kammler, head of the *Amt II-Bauten* (Office II-Construction) of the *SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten*. On 1 February 1942, was

created the SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt (Central SS Administrative and Economic Office), founding the *Hauptamt Verwaltung und Wirtschaft* and the *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten*, in which *Amt II* (Office II) became *Amtsgruppe C* (Office Group C), at all times directed by Kammler.

On 1 November 1941, he sent to the *Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei* at Lublin the post-dated order for construction of the camp:

*"I hereby issue the order to construct a Kriegsgefangenenlager at Lublin to house 125,000 POWs" ["Der Baubefehl für die Errichtung eines Kriegsgefangenenlagers in Lublin zur Unterbringung von 125,000 Kriegsgefangene wird hiermit erteilt"]*[\[32\]](#).

But the camp capacity was soon expanded to 150,000 prisoners. On 8 December, Kammler transmitted the following order to the local *Zentralbauleitung*:

*"With reference to the construction order dated 1 November 1941, I hereby issue the expanded construction order for the creation of a POW camp at Lublin for the total manpower force of 150,000 prisoners or inmates".*

*["Im Nachgang zum Baubefehl vom 1.11.41 erteile ich hiermit den erweiterten Baubefehl zur Errichtung eines Kriegsgefangenenlagers in Lublin für eine Gesamtkopfzahl von 150000 Kriegsgefangenen bzw. Häftlingen"]*[\[33\]](#).

A few weeks later, on 26 November, Globocnik, in his capacity as *Beauftragte für die Errichtung der SS- und Polizeistützpunkte im neuen Ostraum*, ordered the *Zentralbauleitung* of Lublin "to construct a resupply transit camp [*Durchgangsnachschublager*] for the *Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer* of South Russia and Caucasia, which consisted of 13 housing barracks, including 11 warehouses" [\[34\]](#). The camp was completed and commissioned on 11 September 1942[\[35\]](#). This was intended to resupply the various offices assigned to the construction projects in the Eastern territories. A circular letter from the head of the *Amt CV/Zentrale Bauinspektion* (Office CV/Central Construction Project Inspection Office), SS-Sturmbannführer Lenzer, dated 1 September 1942 with subject "SS Offices Assigned to the Construction Projects and Measures in the Occupied Territories" (*SS-Baudienststellen und Baumassnahmen in den besetzten Gebieten insbesondere im Ostraum*), ordered that every construction program be divided into exterior work (*A-Arbeiten*) and interior work (*B-Arbeiten*), and required all construction groups (*Baugruppen*) to advise, by 1 November, which projects had been completed in 1942 and which could be completed by 1 April 1943[\[36\]](#).

The origins of Birkenau camp, which precisely matched the initial purposes of the Lublin camp, form part of this context as well. This was planned on 30 October 1941, also for 125,000 prisoners, for whom 174 housing barracks were planned (*Gefangenenunterkunftbaracken*), each of them capable of housing a maximum number of 744 persons[\[37\]](#), but the pertinent construction order from Kammler was also scheduled for reporting on 1 November:

*"I hereby issue the related construction order for a Kriegsgefangenenlager at Auschwitz intended to house 125,000 POWs" ["Der Baubefehl für die Errichtung eines Kriegsgefangenenlagers in Auschwitz zur Unterbringung von 125,000 Kriegsgefangene wird hiermit erteilt"]*[\[38\]](#).

The first plans of the camp, the *Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers-Auschwitz O.S* (Diagram of Auschwitz POW Camp, Upper Silesia) of 7 and 14 October 1941[\[39\]](#) contemplated 174 housing barracks,

but already that of 5 January 1942[40] contained 282, that of 6 June[41] 360 and that of 16 August 513[42]. The capacity is indicated only in the last one. This plan appears divided into four sectors, of them three with 153 housing barracks each per 60,000 prisoners and one with 54 housing barracks for 20,000 prisoners, so that the total capacity was 200,000 prisoners. The plan of 6 June 1942 consists of two sectors with 153 housing barracks each and one with 54 barracks; therefore the anticipated manpower force should have been 140,000 prisoners, but, as we shall soon see, it was 150,000. On the other hand, the 282 housing barracks of the plan of 5 January 1942 were clearly intended for 125,000 persons. In practice, from 7 and 14 October 1941 to 16 August 1942, the number of persons anticipated for each housing barrack decreased by half ( $125,000 \div 174 =$ ) 718 to ( $200,000 \div 513 =$ ) 390.

The first known mention of an increase in the capacity of the *Kriegsgefangenenlager* from 125,000 to 150,000 POWs is found in a letter from Kammler to *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Karl Bischof, head of the *Auschwitz Zentralbauleitung*[43], dated 22 June 1942:

*“Please let me know immediately how many barracks you need for completion of the POW camp to house 150,000 POWs”* [“Erbitte umgehend Mitteilung wieviele Baracken Sie zur Fertigstellung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers zur Unterbringung von 150000 Kriegsgefangenen benötigen”][44].

In a letter to Amt C V of the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt* dated 29 June, Bischoff wrote that until that time, for the third financial year of the war, 264 housing barracks had been authorized, stating:

*“Since according to the order from the Reichsführer-SS and head of the German police, the camp had to be expanded from 125,000 POWs to 150,000 POWs, the following Bauwerke[45] were still absolutely necessary for completion of the camp, which in part were indicated in the list of the cubic capacity of the plenipotentiary for wooden construction projects dated 25 May 1942”.*

[„Da laut Befehl des Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei das Lager von 125,000 Kriegsgefangenen auf 150000 Kriegsgefangene erweitert werden soll, sind zur Fertigstellung des Lagers jedoch noch unbedingt folgende Bauwerke erforderlich, die bereits zum Teil bei der Aufstellung des B.F.H[46].-Volumens für das Kriegsgefangenenlager vom 25.5.1942 angegeben waren“].

The additional housing barracks were 63 *Unterkunftbaracken* type 260/9 [41 by 10 meters] and 36 type IV/3 [20 by 8 meters][47]. In total, for a capacity of 150,000 prisoners, 363 barracks were therefore anticipated, therefore the plan of 6 June 1942 no doubt referred to the new manpower force ordered by Himmler.

At Lublin, the expansion of the camp to 150,000 prisoners had already been decided upon: the pertinent plan bears the date of 23 March 1942[48].

The expansion of the *Kriegsgefangenenlager* of Birkenau to 200,000 persons was ordered by Himmler during his visit to Auschwitz on 17 and 18 July 1942. In a letter dated 3 August 1942, addressed to the Amt C V of the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt*, Bischoff wrote:

*“The expansion of the project has been presented to the head of the group of officers C SS-Brigadeführer and Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr of Engineering Kammler during the Reichsführer’s visit on 17 and 18 July 1942. Please indicate your approval on a copy of the annexed plan and return it to us promptly”.*

[„Die Erweiterung der Planung hat anlässlich des Reichsführer-Besuches am 17. und 18. Juli 1942 dem Amtgruppenschef C SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr. Ing. Kammler vorgelegen und wird um entsprechenden Genehmigungsvermerk auf 1 Exemplar des beiliegenden Lageplanes und baldige Rücksendung desselben gebeten“][49].

And on 27 August, Bischoff communicated to the same office:

*“The annexed plan has already taken account of the expansion of the capacity of the camp for POWs recently requested to 200,000 persons”.*

[“In beiliegendem Lageplan ist der neuerdings geforderte Ausbau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers auf eine Belegstärke von 200,000 Mann bereits berücksichtigt“][50].

The annexed plan was the plan mentioned below, dated 16 August 1942.

The *“Generalplan Ost”* initially also reiterated the Stutthof camp. Himmler visited it on 23 November 1941 and on 19 December he wrote as follows to *SS-Gruppenführer Pohl*:

*“I have reached the conclusion that Stutthof is of very great importance for the future colonization of the Gau of Danzig-West Prussia [...]. “Stutthof must moreover be expanded in the sense that in one camp they can house 20,000 Russians, with whom we can then carry out the colonization plan for the Gau of Danzig-Prussia.”*

[„Ich bin zu der Überzeugung gekommen, daß Stutthof von größter Bedeutung für die spätere Besiedlung des Gaus Danzig-Westpreußen ist. [...].

Stutthof muß außerdem in der Richtung ausgebaut werden, da es in einem Lager später 20000 Russen aufnehmen kann, mit denen wir dann den Siedlungsaufbau des Gaus Danzig-Westpreußen vollziehen können“][51].

According to Schulte,

*“...including Stutthof, Himmler, Pohl and Kammler, as a result, were relying on a total of 300,000 Soviet POWs or inmates by mid-December 1941; in the context of the subsequent construction phase, this figure was to be increased to at least 375,000 Soviet POWs or inmates, to be employed for tasks relating to the colonization of the East”* [52].

Nevertheless, on the one hand, the POWs actually delivered to the camps were very few—at Auschwitz, about 10,000 by the beginning of October 1941—and on the other hand, they were dying en masse from the disastrous living and working conditions—at Auschwitz, according to the Death Books (*Totenbuch*), 8,320 of them died in only 144 days [53].

*“For Himmler and Pohl”, Schulte remarked, “the problem again arose of who should build the SS and Police bases and the large settlements in the ‘new space in the East’ and who should expand the local infrastructures. After the brutal treatment in the SS POW camps and Armed Forces base camps, the Red Army POWs were no longer available as manpower, at least for the foreseeable future. Since there was no question of amending the gigantic plans, the direction the SS was to take a new group of victims into consideration as forced workers”* [54].

This group was the Jews, who



*"...had to carry forward the colonization of the East planned by the SS and construct a gigantic road network which was to serve not only for military purposes but also, and above all, as a colonizing strategy. The "Generalplan Ost" of June 1942 demonstrated, not without reason, the importance of the road network, which should have provided the link between the individual settlements. As Adolf Hitler stressed in mid-October 1941, this road network was to be built chiefly by Soviet POWs. As a result, Organization Todt had also planned the employment of Red Army POWs for construction of the IV transit road[55]. When they were no longer available, Jewish workers were substituted for their deceased predecessors. Deported Jews were also to be employed for this purpose. In January 1942, there were also plans to use Jews for road building work in the Ukraine"[56].*

It was to precisely these road building projects that Heydrich was referring in the well known minutes of the Wannsee Conference[57]:

*"Under adequate management, within the context of the Final Solution, the Jews should travel in an appropriate manner to the labor employment to the East. In great working columns, separated by sex, the able-bodied Jews should be taken to these territories to build roads[58]; doing this, without doubt a great proportion of them will perish through natural diminution".*

[„Unter entsprechender Leitung sollen nun im Zuge der Endlösung die Juden in geeigneter Weise im Osten zum Arbeitseinsatz kommen. In großen Arbeitskolonnen, unter Trennung der Geschlechter, werden die arbeitsfähigen Juden straßenbauend in diese Gebiete geführt, wobei zweifellos ein Großteil durch natürliche Verminderung ausfallen wird“][59].

The SS were also thinking of the reclamation of the swampy territories of the Pripet, which extended between Poland and White Ruthenia, as is attested, among other things, by two studies which appeared in December 1941 and June 1942 in the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (Geopolitical Review): „*Die Pripjetsümpfe als Entwässerungsproblem*“ (The Pripet Marshes as Draining Problem), by Richard Bergius, and “Pripjet-Polesien, Land und Leute” (Pripet-Polesia, Territory and Inhabitants), by Hansjulius Schepers[60]. Moreover, the idea of a network of canals linking the Black Sea to the Baltic (*Wasserstraßenverbindung*) had already been advanced by Alfred Rosenberg on 8 May 1941, in a directive for a *Reichskommissariat* in the Eastern territories[61].

In this context, on 26 January 1942, Himmler ordered Glücks as follows:

*"As no more Russian prisoners of war are expected in the near future, I shall send to the camps a large number of Jews and Jewesses who will be sent out of Germany. Make the necessary arrangements for the reception of 100,000 male Jews and up to 50,000 Jewesses into the concentration camps during the next 4 weeks. The concentration camps will have to deal with major economic problems and tasks in the next weeks. SS Gruppenfuehrer Pohl will inform you of particulars.*

[Translation Trial of War Criminals, vol. V, p. 365]

[„Nachdem russische Kriegsgefangene in der nächsten Zeit nicht zu erwarten sind, werde ich von den Juden und Jüdinnen, die aus Deutschland ausgewandert werden, eine große Anzahl in die Lager schicken. Richten Sie darauf ein, in den nächsten 4 Wochen 100000 männliche Juden und bis zu 50000 Jüdinnen in die KL aufzunehmen. Große wirtschaftliche Aufgaben und Aufträge werden in den nächsten Wochen an die Konzentrationslager herantreten. SS-Gruppenführer Pohl wird Sie im einzelnen unterrichten“][62].

Himmler considered these 150,000 Jewish inmates to constitute “primarily, manpower for the ‘Generalplan Ost’” [63].

In conformity with the above mentioned directives, the first transports sent to Auschwitz contained only able-bodied Jews who were immediately registered.

On 16 February 1942 Martin Luther, official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sent a teletype informing the German ambassador at Bratislava (Pressburg) that “in the framework of the provisions for the Final Solution of the Jewish question in Europe” (*im Zuge der Massnahmen zur Endlösung der europäischen Judenfrage*), the government of the Reich was prepared to transfer immediately “20,000 young, strong Slovakian Jews” (20 000 *junge kräftige slowakische Juden*) to the East (*nach den Osten*), where there was a need for manpower (*wo Arbeitseinsatzbedarf besteht*) [64]. Approximately 10,000 Jews were sent to Auschwitz.

On 22 June 1942, *SS-Sturmbannführer* Adolf Eichmann wrote a letter addressed to the Embassy adviser Franz Rademacher, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the subject “Labor deployment of Jews from France, Belgium and Holland”, in which he wrote:

*“We plan to transport to Auschwitz camp for labor use starting in mid-July or the beginning of August of this year, in special trains, traveling every day, carrying 1,000 persons each, initially with approximately 40,000 Jews from the occupied French territory, 40,000 Jews from Holland and 10,000 Jews from Belgium”.*

(“Es ist vorgesehen, ab Mitte Juli bzw. Anfang August ds. Jrs. in täglich verkehrenden Sonderzügen zu je 1,000 Personen zunächst etwa 40,000 Juden aus dem besetzten französischen Gebiet, 40,000 Juden aus den Niederlanden und 10,000 Juden aus Belgien zum Arbeitseinsatz in das Lager Auschwitz abzubefördern”).

But as early as 10 March 1942, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Theodor Dannecker, official in charge of Jewish affairs in France, with reference to the meeting held on 4 March at Office IV B 4 of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, wrote that they could undertake preliminary negotiations with the French authorities “with a view to the deportation of approximately 5,000 Jews to the East” (*wegen des Abschubs von rd. 5000 Juden nach dem Osten*).

“In this regard”, Dannecker remarked, “we must first of all process able-bodied male Jews, no older than 55 years of age” („*Dabei habe es sich zunächst um männliche, arbeitsfähige Juden, nicht über 55 Jahre, zu handeln*“) [65].

The following table summarizes the data relating to the first 18 Jewish transports arriving at Auschwitz from Slovakia and France [66].

Date	Count	Origins	Men Count	IDs Assigned	Women Count	IDs Assigned
26/3	999	Slovakia	-	-	999	1000-1998
28/3	798	Slovakia	-	-	798	1999-2796

30/3	1112	Compiègne	1112	27533-28644	-	-
2/4	965	Slovakia	-	-	965	2797-3761
3/4	997	Slovakia	-	-	997	3763-3812, 3814-4760
13/4	1077	Slovakia	634	28903-29536	443	4761-5203
17/4	1000	Slovakia	973	29832-30804	27	5204-5230
19/4	1000	Slovakia	464	31418-31881	536	5233-5768
23/4	1000	Slovakia	543	31942-32484	457	5769-6225
24/4	1000	Slovakia	442	32649-33090	558	6226-6783
29/4	723	Slovakia	423	33286-33708	300	7108-7407
22/5	1000	KL Lublin	1000	36132-37131	-	-
7/6	1000	Compiègne	1000	38177-39176	-	-
20/6	659	Slovakia	404	39923-40326	255	7678-7932
24/6	999	Drancy	933	40681-41613	66	7961-8026
27/6	1000	Pithiviers	1000	41773-42772	-	-
30/6	1038	Beaune-La Rolande	1004	42777-43780	34	8051-8084
30/6	400	KL Lublin	400	43833-44232	-	-
Total	16,767		10,332		6,435	

Schulte himself acknowledges that

“...by order of the Reichsführer-SS, “able-bodied” Jews, in particular, were to continue to be deported to Auschwitz[67].

and that

“Himmler and Pohl, at the beginning of June 1942, still thought of Auschwitz as a forced-labor camp—primarily filled with Jewish inmates—for the “colonization of the East”[68].

As a result, Schulte concludes, “the mass extermination was not considered a priority matter [69].

But can all this be reconciled with the alleged extermination of the Jews?

Schulte states that

“For the SS, at Auschwitz it was not unusual for their camp to serve at the same time as a killing center and a forced-labor center. In the late summer and autumn of 1941 two categories of Soviet POWs had been catalogued, one for execution, the other for work” [70].

In this context, he testified to—in a note—the first alleged homicidal gassing with Zyklon B in the cellar (“Bunker”) of Block 11 of the *Stammlager*:

“In September or December 1941, after the Soviet POWs had already been killed in provisional gas chambers in the main camp, a gas chamber was built in Crematorium I” (emphasis added)[71].

### **Commutations of Death Sentences of Soviet POWs**

The first transports of Soviet prisoners arrived at Auschwitz on 7 October 1941. The sending of these transports was ordered in conformity with the “Provisions for the Handling of Soviet POWs in all POW camps” (*Anordnungen für die Behandlung sowjetischer Kriegsgefangenen in allen Kriegsgefangenenlagern*) issued on 8 September 1941 by the High Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*). These provisions prescribed among other things, the location in the POW camps of Russian soldiers and civilians and to sort them into the following three groups:

- a) politically undesirable (*politisch Unerwünschte*)
- b) politically non-dangerous (*politisch Ungefährliche*)
- c) politically particularly trustworthy (*politisch besonders Vertrauenswürdige*).

The decision as to who were the “politically undesirable elements” was left up to the *Einsatzkommando* of the Security Police and the Security Service[72].

These provisions were reissued in the directives of 17 July 1941 (*Einsatzbefehl*/operational order/ no. 8) relating to the installation in the POW camps of *Kommandos* of the Security Police and Security Service (Heydrich), to whom the control of all camp inmates was assigned, as well as:

“...the identification and subsequent disposition of:

- a) of intolerable elements from the political, criminal or other points of view, among them, and
- b) of those persons who may be employed for the reconstruction of the occupied territories”.

Every week, the heads of the *Einsatzkommandos* had to send a report to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, which, based on the reports, would have communicated the measures to take, including execution [73].

According to the measures specified, the Soviet POWs had to be subjected to a selection to separate—and execute—the politically dangerous elements from those who were harmless or who could become collaborators.

In these matters there also intervened the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps, in search of manpower for the “*Generalplan Ost*”.

On 15 November 1941, *SS-Brigadeführer* Glücks sent a secret order to the concentration camps that read as follows:

*“Reichsführer-SS and head of the German police has declared himself generally in agreement that the execution of Soviet POWs (particularly commissars) transferred into the concentration camps for execution, who, by virtue of their physical condition, may be employed for work in a stone quarry, may be waived. For this measure, it will be necessary to request the consent of the head of the Security Police and Security Service in advance\.*

*In this regard, it hereby ordered:*

*Upon arrival at the camp of transports for execution, physically strong Russians capable of working in a stone quarry are to be selected by the head of the Protective Custody Camp (E) [74] and the camp physician. A list of names of the selected Russians must be filed with this office, in duplicate. In this list, the camp physician must note that there are no medical objections to the employment in the work of the persons concerned. After the declaration of consent from the head of the Security Police and Security Service, by this office is ordered the transfer of the Russians concerned to a stone quarry”.*

[Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei hat sich grundsätzlich damit einverstanden erklärt, daß von den in die Konz. Lager zur Exekution überstellten russischen Kriegsgefangenen (insbesondere Kommissare), die auf Grund ihrer körperlichen Beschaffenheit zur Arbeit in einem Steinbruch eingesetzt werden können, die Exekution aufgeschoben wird. Zu dieser Maßnahme muß vorher das Einverständnis des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD eingeholt werden.

Hierzu wird befohlen:

Beim Eintreffen von Exekutionstransporten in die Lager sind die körperlich kräftigen Russen, die sich für eine Arbeit in einem Steinbruch eignen, durch den Schutzhaftlagerführer (E) und dem Lagerarzt heraus zu suchen. Eine namentliche Liste der herausgesuchten Russen ist in Doppel ausgefertigt hier vorzulegen.

Auf dieser Liste muß der Lagerarzt vermerken, daß gegen den Arbeitseinsatz der Betreffenden ärztlicherseits keine Bedenken bestehen.

Nach Einverständniserklärung des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD wird die Überstellung der Betreffenden Russen in ein Steinbruchlager von hier befohlen/[75].

Two days later, on 17 November, Maximilian Grabner, head of the Auschwitz Political Section sent the following letter to the *Schutzhaftlagerführer* (E) of the camp (Karl Fritsch):

*“Based on the following order, a list of names of all Russians exempt from execution must be transmitted to this office. At the same time, please inform this office, by name, of all [Russians] to be considered for the following order, since the list of names must be transmitted to the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps and the head of the Security Service. In this regard, the consent of the camp physician is absolutely necessary.*

*The Russians indicated in the attached list[76] and the Russian POWs selected last week by the Sonderkommando should be considered should be reviewed under the terms of the foregoing”.*

*[„Auf Grund des umstehenden Erlasses sind die von der Exekution ausgenommen Russen namentlich hierher zu melden. Gleichzeitig wird ersucht nach hier zu berichten welche zum unstehenden Befehl in Frage kommen, da diese listenmässig beim IKL und beim Chef der Sicherheitspolizei eingereicht werden müssen. In dieser Hinsicht das Einvernehmen mit dem hiesigen Lagerarzt unbedingt erforderlich. [sic]*

*In Frage kommen die auf der beiliegenden Liste aufgeführten Russen und die vom Sonderkommando in der vergangenen Woche zur Exekution ausgesuchten russ. Kriegsgefangene”][77].*

The *Sonderkommando* mentioned by Grabner was the commission presided over by Dr. Rudolf Mildner, head of the Gestapo at Kattowitz, who arrived at Auschwitz in November 1941 and who therefore had drawn up an initial list of Soviet POWs to be executed as early as the beginning of the second ten-day period of the month. On the basis of his activity, reported in detail ex-Auschwitz inmate and ex-director of the local Museum Kazimierz Smoleń[78]:

It is therefore obvious that the first executions could not have taken place prior to 17 November. Precisely on the basis of these considerations, already discussed by myself at the beginning of the 1990s[79], Pressac shifted the date of the “first gassing” at Auschwitz from September (the dating of the *Kalendarium* of Auschwitz) to December 1941[80]. For his part, Schulte, not knowing which date to choose, cites both. Nevertheless, the “first gassing” has no historical basis[81], nor do the “gas chambers” in Crematorium I[82].

But regardless of the above, Schulte’s explanation of the contradiction, as indicated above, seems unfounded, not only because the Soviet POWs were simply not slated for execution en masse at all, but also because even those sentenced to death—approximately 300 men, according to Smoleń[83]—were commuted if they were physically able to work, a fact strongly indicative of the priority given to the utilization of prisoner labor, including individual prisoners legally sentenced to death.

### **Background and Assessment of the Extermination Theory**

The mass extermination of the Jews is thought to have developed at Auschwitz later, through a subsequent phase which is no less unsustainable: the gassing of the Jews unable to work who had worked in the labor camps of the Schmelz organization in Upper Silesia[84]. The first transport of these inmates, according to the *Kalendarium* of Danuta Czech, should have arrived at the camp on 15 February 1942, but as Schulte correctly observes,

*“The referenced situation of this transport is extremely unsatisfactory. The dating is based solely on a communication from the International Research Service”, which appears in a note in Höss’s autobiography [85]. There is in fact no operational document attesting to the reality of this transport.*

Schulte declares that

*“At the beginning of May 1942, Auschwitz was included in the regional extermination actions which had addressed first the Jews of the Warthegau, then those of the district of Lublin at Lemberg”,*

and now affected those of western Upper Silesia [\[86\]](#).

The reference is to the alleged extermination camps at Chełmno and Bełżec, which are said to have begun operation in December 1941 and March 1942 [\[87\]](#). He obviously does not realize that the creation of total extermination camps, in which able-bodied Jews were also exterminated, is in flagrant contradiction with the policies of Himmler and Pohl to acquire Jewish manpower for the *“Generalplan Ost”*. This contradiction is particularly evident for the Bełżec camp. On 17 March 1942, Fritz Reuters, a staffer in the *Abteilung Bevölkerungswesen und Fürsorge* (Department of Implementation and Support of Inhabitation) of the office of the Governor of the district of Lublin drew up a note in which he referred to a talk he had had the day before with *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Hermann Höfle. The latter had decided that unfit Jews would all have been sent to Bełżec; the camp would have been able to “receive 4-5 transports per day of 1,000 Jews”, said to have been deported “beyond the confines” and believed not to have returned to the General *Gouvernement*. The camp was in fact located on the old German-Soviet border, and was therefore defined as “an extreme station of confines of the circumscription of Zamość”. As regards able-bodied Jews, the note says:

*“SS-Hauptsturmführer Höfle is building a large camp in which able-bodied Jews may be registered with the card file system according to their professions, whence they may be requisitioned. Piaski will be liberated of Polish Jews and will become a collection point (Sammelpunkt) for Jews arriving from the Reich. [...]. Höfle asks where, on the stretch Dęblin-Trawniki [\[88\]](#), may be unloaded 60,000 Jews” [\[89\]](#).*

Höfle was the acting *SS- und Polizeiführer* of the district of Lublin, therefore representing Globocnik, who was also the “head of construction of bases for the SS and Police in the Eastern territory”, thus he also operated within the framework of *“Generalplan Ost”*. The purpose of the camp for able-bodied Jews was probably that of supplying manpower for the *Durchgangstraße* IV in nearby Galicia.

As regards the alleged killing of the Jews of Upper Silesia, it should be noted that, in reality, there is no documentary trace of the 15 transports alleged to have arrived at Auschwitz from this region between 5 May and 18 August 1942, whose passengers are alleged to have been all gassed (35,130 persons),

to say nothing of the alleged installation of the two gassing “*Bunkers*”, which as such never existed [\[90\]](#).

Schulte mentions the beginning of May as the starting point for the alleged “extermination actions”, because the *Kalendarium* of Auschwitz states that the first selection of sick inmates occurred on 4 May 1942; these inmates are said to have been gassed in “*Bunker 1*” [\[91\]](#). Once again, there is no documentary evidence for this.

For Schulte, however, these selections were only episodic actions. The systematic actions were alleged in his opinion at the beginning of July 1942. This is how he sets forth his thesis:

*“To be able to carry out the killing and the recruiting of forced workers at the same time, for future employment, the SS of the camp began to select the arriving transports into “able-bodied” and “non-able bodied”. As far as is known, the selection of an entire transport occurred on 4 July 1942: 372 Slovakian Jews were judged “able-bodied”, and the remaining 628 were sent to the gas chambers” [\[92\]](#).*

This assertion is taken from the *Kalendarium* of Auschwitz and is inferred from the simple observation that, starting on 4 July 1942<sup>[93]</sup>, the number of inmates registered from a transport is greatly less than the total number of deportees. There is no doubt that the registered inmates were generally able-bodied, but there is nothing to show that the non-able-bodied were gassed. As early as 13 August, SS-*Sturmbannführer* Rolf Günther sent the SS authorities at Paris a telegram bearing the object “Deportation of Jews to Auschwitz. Separation There of Jewish children” (*Ab(t)ransport von Juden nach Auschwitz. Dort Abschiebung der Judenkinder*)<sup>[94]</sup>. The children were to be evacuated to the Eastern ghettos. I have also noted that Gisi Fleischmann, well-known Slovakian Zionist leader, in a letter dated 24 March 1943, remarked that some deportation reports mentioned the presence of Belgian Jews at Dęblin-Irena<sup>[95]</sup> and Końskowola, a village 6 km from Puławy, in the Lublin region, and that these Jews had arrived over the past few weeks; but all the transports of Jews arriving from Belgium by the end of March 1943 had been directed to Auschwitz<sup>[96]</sup>, therefore some of them had continued their trip on to the Lublin region. I will return to this question later.

What Schulte says right afterwards appears even more disputable:

*“Since there was no concrete plan for the use of Jewish forced laborers in the ‘colonization of the East’ and not even the SS Economic and Administrative Office had given instructions for the creation of a manpower reserve, the decision on the death of the Jews deported to Auschwitz lay almost exclusively with the SS, which supervised the unloading platform at Birkenau, which as always, could feel themselves covered by Reichsführer-SS. As early as 17 and 18 July 1942, Himmler was present at the selection of deportees from a transport and the killing in the gas chambers of persons classified as ‘able-bodied’. In this way he sanctioned de facto the procedure introduced by the SS in the camp”*<sup>[97]</sup>.

This is historically unfounded and contradictory.

As I have shown in another study, on 17 and 18 July 1942, two Jewish transports arrived at Auschwitz from the Dutch camp of Westerbork and one from Slovakia. Based on the camp *Stärkebuch*, the first transport arrived not earlier than 8:00PM on the 16th and not later than 6:00AM on the 17th; the other two arrived not before 8:00PM on the 17th and not later than 6:00AM on the 18th. According to Himmler’s diary he landed at Kattowitz airport at 3:15PM on the 17th; therefore, he could not have seen the first transport of Dutch Jews, who were allegedly gassed before 6:00AM. His visit to Auschwitz was concluded at 8:00PM with a dinner at the officers’ mess. After dinner, Himmler was accompanied to Kattowitz, where he was lodged for the night by *Gauleiter* Bracht. On the morning of the 18th, at 9:00AM he was still in Bracht’s house, and only got to Auschwitz after breakfast. For this reason, he could not even have seen the other two transports of Jews, which were allegedly/presumably gassed between 8:00PM on the 17th and 6:00AM on the 18th<sup>[98]</sup>. For this reason, Himmler could in no event have been present at a gassing of Jews.

On the other hand, Himmler’s “sanction” implies a recognition and acceptance on his part of a state of fact, therefore he did not issue any general Jewish extermination order to Höss; vice-versa, if we accept Höss’s account, according to which Himmler issued the extermination order in June 1941, Birkenau camp would necessarily have been planned and built in execution of this order and we would fall back into the interpretation of the Auschwitz Museum discussed at the beginning. Schulte has been criticized for precisely this, by Michael Thad Allen, who radicalizes the thesis of the Auschwitz Museum<sup>[99]</sup>. To the contrary, Schulte explicitly declares that



*“Himmler, Pohl and the SS planning experts had designed Auschwitz-Birkenau, not as an extermination camp, but as a labor camp for the colonization of the East”* [\[100\]](#),

explaining:

*“At the beginning of June 1942, Himmler decided that ‘non-able bodied’ Western Jews should also be deported to Auschwitz in the future”,*

obviously for purposes of extermination, because:

*“...Birkenau was utilised as an extermination camp for the European Jews only after July 1942”* [\[101\]](#).

For this reason, Himmler’s alleged extermination order would have to date back to June 1942, contrary to Höss’s statements, which are therefore revealed as unreliable in terms of historical-chronological development, together with the entire edifice of Holocaust historiography subsequently constructed on the basis of Höss’s statements.

Schulte adds that

*“On 19 July, the Reichsführer-SS ordered the killing of the entire Jewish population of the General Gouvernement with the exception of a few Jews to be gathered in labor camps”* [\[102\]](#),

But the document he mentions says only:

*“I hereby order that the transfer of the entire Jewish population of the General Gouvernement be implemented and concluded by 31 December 1942”* [“Ich ordne an, daß die Umsiedlung der gesamten jüdischen Bevölkerung des Generalgouvernements bis 31. Dezember 1942 durchgeführt und beendet ist”].

One further passage clarifies the meaning of this order:

*“These measures are indispensable for the ethnic separation of races and populations required within the framework of the New European Order as well as in the interests of the security and cleanliness of the German Reich and of its spheres of interest”.*

[„Diese Maßnahmen sind zu der im Sinne der Neuordnung Europas notwendigen ethnischen Scheidung von Rassen und Völker sowie im Interesse der Sicherheit und der Sauberkeit des deutschen Reiches und seiner Interessengebiete erforderlich“] [\[103\]](#).

This is an unequivocal reference to the “Generalplan Ost”.

Schulte concludes that

*“In July 1942, the labor employment of Jewish inmates in colonization plans for the East by the SS Central Economic and Administrative Office was then relegated to second place”* [\[104\]](#),

but immediately afterwards, he falls into another contradiction:

*“In truth, Himmler and Pohl were still planning, as always, to build a large forced labor camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau for the ‘colonization of the East’, but the homicidal actions took top priority, either because of the decisions of the Reichsführer-SS of mid-May 1942 or because of the SS de facto policies in the camp”,*

so that

*“To the labor employment no more than secondary importance was given. From July 1942, Auschwitz-Birkenau was used above all as a killing centre for the Jews of Western and South-Eastern Europe”* [\[105\]](#).

At this point, however, the problem arises of increasing the camp capacity to 200,000 inmates, which, as we have seen above, was ordered by Himmler as a result of his visit to Auschwitz on 17 and 18 July 1942 and confirmed in the 16 August plan for Birkenau. Schulte, however, instead of resolving this contradiction, restricts himself to take official note of it, writing:

*“The extermination and reception facilities were both expanded, probably due to direct intervention by Himmler during his stay at Auschwitz”* [\[106\]](#).

Apart from the contradictory nature of this statement, the indisputable fact remains that the only documented decision made by Himmler is that relating to the expansion of the camp; therefore, the labor deployment was still a matter of priority concern. In the background there was no extermination.

On the other hand, Hitler issued the order to cease all “preparations and plans for future tasks of the peace” only on 13 January 1943 [\[107\]](#).

The function of Birkenau camp, which continued regardless to be called a *Kriegsgefangenenlager* [\[108\]](#), changed only in September 1942. During the month of October, the building plan (*Bauvorhaben*) “Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz” was given the official designation of “*Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung*” (implementation of special treatment) [\[109\]](#). This change consisted of a vast program of construction projects to transform the camp into a source of manpower for the industries which had already arisen or were to arise in the territory around Auschwitz. A flow chart of the *Zentralbauleitung* drawn up by Bischoff in January 1943 mentioned in one sentence the “*Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlager (Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung)*” [\[110\]](#), in another the “**Bauleitung Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz (Durchführung der Sonderbaumaassnahmen)**” [\[111\]](#), establishing a full equivalence between “implementation of special treatment” and “implementation of special construction measures”.

As a result, a new plan was drawn up on 6 October 1942 in which the camp was divided into three sections: Section (*Lagerabschnitt*) 1, for 20,000 inmates, and Sections 2 and 3 for 60,000 inmates each, for a total capacity of 140,000 inmates [\[112\]](#).

A letter from Kammler to the *Generalbevollmächtigte für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft* (Chief of Coordination of the Construction Industry) dated 15 September 1942 bearing the subject “Special Construction Tasks for KL Auschwitz» (*Sonderbauaufgaben für das K.L. Auschwitz*) informs us that the program was approved by Albert Speer, responsible for the Four-Year Plan and Chief of Coordination of the Construction Industry, and Pohl, head of the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt*:

*“With reference to the talk between Herr Reichsminister Prof. Speer and SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS Pohl I will advise you in due course the additional volumes for the special program (Sonderprogramm) of KL Auschwitz as follows:*

- 1.) *List of the necessary additional Bauwerke with pertinent volumes for construction.*
- 2.) *List of necessary materials and barracks.*

*The work will be executed essentially by the inmates. A construction completion period of 50 weeks has been established for the entire Bauvorhaben. In addition to the inmates, an average of 350 skilled and common laborers will be required. This corresponds to 105,000[113] working days“.*

[„Unter Bezugnahme auf die Besprechung zwischen Herrn Reichsminister Prof. Speer und SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS Pohl teile ich nachstehend das zusätzliche Bau-Volumen für das Sonderprogramm des K.L. Auschwitz wie folgt mit:

- 1.) Zusammenstellung der erforderlichen zusätzlichen Bauwerke mit zugehörigem Bauvolumen.
- 2.) Zusammenstellung der erforderlichen Baustoffe und Baracken.

Die Arbeiten werden im wesentlichen durch Häftlinge ausgeführt. Als Bauzeit für das gesamte Bauvorhaben werden 50 Arbeitswochen angesetzt. Ausser den Häftlingen werden im Durchschnitt 350 Fach- und Hilfsarbeiter benötigt. Dies ergibt 105,000 Tagewerke“][114].

### **Redeployment to Armaments Industry**

This program formed part of a larger project which had been discussed by Speer and Pohl concurrently on 15 September 1942. The day afterwards, Pohl drew up a detailed report on it for Himmler. The discussion was organized in four points, the first of which was the “Expansion of the Auschwitz Barracks Camp in Consequence of the Migration to the East” (*Vergrößerung Barackenlager Auschwitz infolge Ostwanderung*). On this point, Pohl declared:

*“Reichsminister Prof. Speer has authorised the expansion on a vast scale of Auschwitz camp and has allocated additional budget to the Auschwitz construction projects of 13,700,000 Reichsmark. This budget includes the installation of approximately 300 barracks, with the related service and auxiliary plants. The materials required will be assigned in the fourth quarter of 1942 and in the first, second and third quarters of 1943.*

*When this supplementary program of construction projects is completed, at Auschwitz we will be able to house a total of 132,000 persons“.*

[„Reichsminister Prof. Speer hat die Vergrößerung des Barackenlagers Auschwitz im vollen Umfang genehmigt und ein zusätzliches Bauvolumen für Auschwitz in Höhe von 13,7 Millionen Reichsmark bereitgestellt].

Dieses Bauvolumen umfasst die Aufstellung von rd. 300 Baracken mit den erforderlichen Versorgungs- und Ergänzungsanlagen].

Die notwendigen Rohstoffe werden im 4. Quartal 1942 sowie im 1., 2. und 3. Quartal 1943 zugeteilt.

Wenn dieses zusätzliche Bauprogramm durchgeführt ist, können in Auschwitz insgesamt 132.000 Mann untergebracht werden“].

Pohl then noted that

*„All participants agreed that all existing concentration camp manpower was to be employed in large-scale armaments tasks“ [„Alle Beteiligten waren sich einig, dass die in den Konzentrationslagern vorhandene Arbeitskraft nunmehr für Rüstungsaufgaben von Grossformat eingesetzt werden müssen“].*

After stressing the need to release German and foreign civilian workmen from the armaments plants whose staff was not complete (to fill the gaps existing in other similar plants) and to replace them with concentration camp inmates, Pohl continues:

*“Reichsminister Prof. Speer wishes to arrange in this way the rapid deployment to start with of 50,000 able-bodied Jews currently barred from their trades, for whom housing is available.*

*The manpower required for this purpose will be diverted above all at Auschwitz from the migration to the East (Ostwanderung), so that our existing business installations are not disturbed in their production and construction by continual staff turnover.*

*The able-bodied Jews intended for migration to the East will therefore interrupt their trip and must provide labor in the field of armaments”.*

[„Reichsminister Prof. Speer will auf diese Weise kurzfristig den Einsatz von zunächst 50.000 arbeitsfähigen Juden in geschlossenen vorhandenen Betrieben mit vorhandenen Unterbringungsmöglichkeiten gewährleisten.

Die für diesen Zweck notwendigen Arbeitskräfte werden wir in erster Linie in Auschwitz aus der Ostwanderung abschöpfen, damit unsere bestehenden betrieblichen Einrichtungen durch einen dauernden Wechsel der Arbeitskräfte in ihrer Leistung und ihrem Aufbau nicht gestört werden.

Die für die Ostwanderung bestimmten arbeitsfähigen Juden werden also ihre Reise unterbrechen und Rüstungsarbeiten leisten müssen“][115].

In practice, Auschwitz was to function as a transit camp for the Jews deported within the framework of the *Ostwanderung* (deportation to the East): the able-bodied ones stayed at the camp, the non-able bodied, including children, continued their trip to the East.

The rationale for this change of function of the camp was explained very clearly by Höss in a speech given at Auschwitz on 22 May 1943 in the presence of Kammler and other officials, in which he outlined the origins and development of the institutional tasks of the camp:

*“Between the Vistula and the Sola, in the triangle formed by their confluence, Auschwitz Camp emerged in 1940, after the evacuation of seven Polish villages, thanks to the expansion of the area of an artillery unit and several adjacent construction projects, both restored and new, using rather large quantities of materials originating from the demolitions. Originally planned as a quarantine camp, this then became a camp of the Reich and received in consequence a new purpose (Zweckbestimmung). Its location between the Reich and the General Gouvernement, due to the continual worsening of the situation, is particularly favorable, because it was guaranteed to fill the camp with manpower. To this was added quite recently the solution of the Jewish problem (die Lösung der Judenfrage), for which it has been necessary to create the facilities to house initially 60,000 inmates, which will very quickly increase to 100,000. The inhabitants of the camp are primarily intended for the large industry which is developing in the vicinity. The camp includes within its zone of interest various armaments factories, for which it is necessary to make manpower [available]”[116].*

Therefore the “Solution of the Jewish Problem” at Auschwitz referred simply to measures for the construction of housing for 100,000 inmates.

## Development of Medical Complex

At the beginning of May 1943 the green light was given for a vast program of “Special Measures for the Improvement of Hygienic Installations” (*Sondermassnahmen für die Verbesserung der hygienischen Einrichtungen*) of Birkenau camp, which, in the documents, is called interchangeably “Sofortprogramm” (Immediate Program), “Sondermassnahme”, (Special Measure), “Sonderprogramm” (Special Program), “Sonderbaumassnahmen” (Special Construction Measures) and “Sonderaktion” (Special Action)[117]. The related written order was transmitted by Kammler to the commandant of Auschwitz on 14 May[118]. From its inception, this program for the improvement of the hygienic installations of Birkenau camp also included the crematoria[119]. The related documents set forth the idea of installing “showers in the undressing room of Crematorium III” (*Brausen im Auskleideraum des Krematoriums III*)[120], which constituted a “plan for [the] production of hot water for approximately 100 showers” (*Projekt für Warmwasserbereitung für ca. 100 Brausen*)[121]. A report dated 16 May states explicitly:

*“There are also plans to install heating coils in the waste incinerator of Crematorium III to generate the [hot] water required for a shower installation, to be built in the semi-underground area of Crematorium III”. [„Weiters ist geplant, im Krematorium III in dem Müllverbrennungsofen Heizschlangen einzubauen, um durch diese das Wasser für eine im Keller des Krematoriums III zu errichtende Brauseanlage zu gewinnen“]*[122].

The extension of the plan to Crematorium II is confirmed by a questionnaire (*Fragebogen*) on the Birkenau crematoria, undated, drawn up by Bischoff in June 1943, in which it is stated that it was planned to use the discharge gases from the chimneys „for bathing installations in Crematoria II and III” (*für Badeanlagen im Crema. II u. III*)[123].

The plan to install 100 showers in Crematorium III (and in another similar installation of Crematorium II) was intended for all the inmates of the camp, as deduced from the fact that at that time, the *Zentralsauna*, the disinfection and disinfestation facility for the entire camp, was equipped with only 54 showers. For various reasons the plan was revised and only 14 showers were installed in Crematorium III[124].

Overall, the morgues of the Birkenau crematoria were always required for use as such, from morning to night, something which would have been impossible if they had been transformed into “undressing rooms” and “gas chambers” for the extermination of the Jews[125].

As early as 20 March 1943, *SS-Standortarzt* (garrison physician), *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Eduard Wirths, made the following request with the camp commandant:

*“For the transport of the bodies from the inmate hospital to the crematorium two covered hand trolleys must be procured permitting the transport of 50 bodies each”. [„Für den Abtransport der Leichen aus dem HKB zum Krematorium müssen 2 gedeckte Handwagen beschaffen werden, die den Transport von je 50 Leichen gestatten“]*[126].

And again on 25 May 1944 (at the height of the deportation and alleged mass killing of the Hungarian Jews), Dr. Wirths wrote:

*“In the inmate infirmary of the camps at KL Auschwitz II every day there are naturally a certain number of cadavers, whose transport to the crematorium is regularly scheduled and occurs twice a day, morning*

*and evening*". [„In den Häftlingsrevieren der Lager des KL Auschwitz II fallen naturgemäß täglich eine bestimmte Anzahl von Leichen an, deren Abtransport zu den Krematorien zwar eingeteilt ist und täglich 2 mal, morgens und abends, erfolgt“][\[127\]](#).

At the time, however, according to Holocaust historiography, the morgues of the crematoria were crammed full of Hungarian Jews intended for extermination, which is in obvious conflict with the above mentioned letter.

Within the framework of the “Special Measures for the Improvement of the Hygienic Facilities” mentioned above, on 17 May 1943, Kammler ordered the transformation of *Bauabschnitt III* (construction section III) of Birkenau camp into an inmate hospital.

The planning was entrusted to Amt C of the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt*, and specifically to *SS-Sturmbannführer* Wirtz, head of the *Amt C/III-Technische Fachgebiete* (Office C/III-Technological-Specialist Sectors) and to *SS-Untersturmführer* Birkigt, head of *Hauptabteilung C/II/3-Lazarette und Reviere* (Main Section C/II/3 – Infirmaries and hospitals).

On 4 June, Wirtz and Birkigt designed plan no. 2521 “*K.L. Auschwitz—Bauabschnitt III. Häftlings-Lazarett u. Quarantäne-Abt.*” (Auschwitz Concentration Camp—Construction Sector III. Inmate Hospital and Quarantine Section) in which this sector is subdivided into two quarantine camps, one for men and one for women, for 4,088 persons each, and two hospital camps (*Krankenfeld*), one for men and one for women, for 3,188 persons each. The two hospital camps provided 2 barracks for “surgery” (*Chirurgie*), 2 barracks for “X rays and treatment” (*Röntgen und Behandlung*), 2 barracks for “pharmacy” (*Apotheke*), 4 “barracks for post-operative patients” (*Baracke für frisch Operierte*) and 4 “barracks for the seriously ill” (*Baracke für Schwerkranken*)[\[128\]](#).

The plan of *Zentralbauleitung* 2637—undated, but no doubt drawn up in June 1943—depicts the planimetry of the male patient section of “*Häftlingsrevier im Bauabschnitt ‘3’ des K.G.L.*” (Hospital for inmates in the construction section ‘3’ of the POW camp). This shows in detail the barracks for post-operative inmates (*frisch Operierte*), denominated 6a and for those with severe internal (*schwere Innere*) conditions, indicated as 6b[\[129\]](#).

An “*Aufstellung über die zur Durchführung der Sondermassnahme im K.G.L. notwendigen Baracken*” (List of Barracks Necessary for the Implementation of the Special Measure) dated 11 June 1943 mentions overall 183 barracks for the “*Bauabschnitt III (Häftlingslazarett)*”, plus 2 for the “*Truppenlazarett*” (infirmary for the troop), including:

- 4 special barracks (*Spezialbaracke[n]*) for ‘post-operative patients’ (*frisch Operierte*)
- 4 special barracks for ‘seriously ill’ (*schwere Innere*)
- 2 special barracks for ‘X rays and treatment’ (*Röntgen und Behandlung*)
- 2 special surgical (*chirurgische*) barracks
- 111 barracks for ordinary ill patients (*Baracken für Normalkranken*)[\[130\]](#).

The construction work began at the end of June. On 13 July, 26 barracks were already built, in addition to the excavation of the circular drainage ditches (*Ringgräben*) and a provisional water treatment plant (*provisorisches Vorklärbecken*)[\[131\]](#).

Another 6 barracks were built on 31 July, in addition to the excavation of two circular drainage ditches and the fence installation work had begun[132].

The “Explanatory Report on the Expansion of the Waffen-SS POW Camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia” drawn up by Bischoff on 30 September 1943, for construction sector III of the camp mentions among other things:

*“BW 3e 114 convalescent barracks (Krankenbaracken) Type 501/34 [43 by 13 meters]*

*BW 6c 4 disinfection barracks (Entwesungsbaracken) Type VII/5 [33 by 8 meters]*

*BW 7c 11 infirmary barracks (Pflegerbaracken) (Schweizerbaracken)*

*BW 12b 12 barracks for the seriously ill (Baracken f. Schwerkranke) type 501/34”[133].*

On 25 September, masonry work was underway in barracks 68, 70, 71, 74, 89, 91, 92 e 93 and carpentry work in barracks 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 94, 128 and 146[134].

On 1 October 1943, SS-Obersturmführer Werner Jothann, just having taken over for Bischoff as head of the *Zentralbauleitung*[135], drew up a “Cost Estimate on the Expansion of the Waffen-SS POW Camp at Auschwitz”, in which, for every *Bauwerk* already constructed or planned the cost estimate was calculated. For the sector of construction projects III (*Bauabschnitt III*), denominated “*Häftlingslazarett*” (inmate hospital), the following structures, among other things, were added: 114 barracks for sick patients (at a cost of 4,542,216 *Reichsmark*), the 4 disinfection barracks (80,940 RM), 11 infirmary barracks (103,488 RM) and the 12 barracks for the seriously ill (515,625), mentioned above[136]:

In the report of 30 October, Jothann stated that by that time 47 barracks had been built, in which finishing work was underway[137].

The subsequent reports, until the end of November, mention the progress of the barracks assembly work and related work for construction of the “inmate hospital” in *Bauabschnitt III*.

On 24 February 1944, Jothann transmitted the request for metal of the Knauth firm (supplier of barracks) to the *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei “Schlesien”* (Waffen-SS and “Silesia” Construction Inspection Projects), explaining that the plan of the camp hospital provided for the overall construction of 180 barracks[138]. 700 inmates were already working in *Bauabschnitt III* as of 31 March 1944[139].

In 1944, the *Zentralbauleitung* defined all the bureaucratic practices relating to the camp hospital.

On 25 May, Jothann drew up an “Explanatory Report on the Expansion of the Waffen-SS POW Camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia. Construction of 111 barracks for ill patients” (*Erläuterungsbericht zum Ausbau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS in Auschwitz O/S. Errichtung von 111 Krankenbaracken*), in which we read:

„The work started on March 15, 1943[140]. 37[141] barracks have been erected and are partly internally fitted out“ [“*Mit den Arbeiten wurde am 15.3.1943 begonnen. 37 Baracken sind fertiggestellt und zum Teil innen ausgebaut*”][142].

On 10 August 1944, the head of Amt C/V (*Zentralbauinspektion*) of the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt*, who had received the above mentioned documentation on 26 June, issued the construction order relating, respectively, according to bureaucratic procedure, to the following:

*“Based on the documents filed I hereby issue construction order for 111 barracks for ill patients in the POW camp, camp II, Auschwitz, construction sector III, Bauwerke 3e and 3fQ”* [“Aufgrund der eingereichten Unterlagen erteile ich hiermit den Befehl zur Errichtung von 111 Krankenbaracken im Kgf.L., Lager II, Auschwitz, BA III, BW 3e und 3f”].

The construction request (*Bauantrag*) for the “12 barracks for seriously ill patients” (*Baracken für Schwerkranke*) was sent by Jothann to the *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei “Schlesien”* on 12 August 1944[143]. On 31 October, Amt C/V of the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt* issued the related retrospective construction order[144].

The construction request for the 11 barracks for infirmaries making up Bauwerk 7e (*Bauantrag zur Errichtung von 11 Stück Pflegerbaracken im BAIII – BW 7e*), was issued by Bischoff on 9 October 1944[145].

On 31 May 1944, in the *Bauabschnitt III* there were 63 barracks[146]. The deportation of the Hungarian Jews caught the *Zentralbauleitung* unprepared and upset the projects relating to the hospital camp.

At the beginning of June, *Bauabschnitt III*, although it was still uninhabitable, was transformed (together with part of camp BIIc and part of BIIa and camp BIIe) into “*Durchgangslager*” (transit camps) for able-bodied unregistered Jews intended for transfer to other camps. On 2 June, Kammler ordered Jothann to make 14 barracks of the *Bauabschnitt III* available to house these Jews[147]. The first Jewish transport was sent there on 9 June. On 16 June, there were already 7,000 Jews there[148]. No fewer than 98,600 Jews passed through the Birkenau transit camp[149].

As I have explained elsewhere[150], the *Zentralbauleitung* was caught completely by surprise by the enormous influx of Hungarian Jews and did not succeed in preparing any decent housing for a large proportion of these future forced laborers of the Reich.

The plan of the hospital camp in *Bauabschnitt III* of Birkenau was definitively abandoned on 23 September 1944, as a result of Jothann’s letter to the *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei “Schlesien”* with the subject “Construction of 12 barracks for the seriously ill in construction sector III-BW 12b” (*Errichtung von 12 Baracken für Schwerkranke im BA.III-BW 12b*) dated 6 December 1944:

*“At the instance of the discussion of the head of the Central Office [Pohl] on 23 September 1944 in Auschwitz, orders were issued to cease construction work in construction sector III of the POW camp and commence the demolition of the 12 barracks for the seriously ill”* [“Anlässlich der Besprechung des Hauptamtschefs am 23.9.44 in Auschwitz, wurde die Einstellung der Bauarbeiten im BA.III des K.G.L. befohlen, und mit Abbruch der 12 Baracken für Schwerkranke begonnen”][151].

Since this hospital camp was planned and partially finished, the argument set forth by Pressac remains fully valid:

“There is an incongruity in the creation of a sanitary camp a few hundred meters from the four crematoria, where, according to the official historiography, persons were exterminated on a vast scale...



The plan to construct a large hospital section in the BAIII thus shows that the crematoria were constructed solely for cremation, without homicidal gas chambers [152], since the SS wished to “conserve” the labor force from their concentration camp” [153].

## Conclusion

To sum up, Birkenau camp was created as a *Kriegsgefangenenlager* in October 1941 as a feature of the “*Generalplan Ost*”.

From September 1942, Birkenau became the selection center for Jewish manpower for German industries, either already in existence or in the planning stage, within the territory of Auschwitz, while simultaneously serving as a transit camp for non-able-bodied Jews deported within the framework of the *Ostwanderung*.

Starting in May 1943, this function was accentuated as the result of a vast program of “special measures for the improvement of the hygienic installations” and plans for an enormous hospital camp to conserve and treat Jews engaged in forced labor.

In May 1944, Birkenau also became a “transit camp” for the distribution of Jewish manpower into other concentration camps.

The alleged extermination of the Jews is refuted by this new historical perspective.

## Abbreviations

AGK: *Archiwum Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* (Archive of the Central Commission of Inquiry into Crimes against the Jewish People – National Memorial), Warsaw

APMM: *Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum na Majdanku* (Archive of the Majdanek State)

APMO: *Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu* (Archive of the Auschwitz State Museum)

BAK: *Bundesarchiv Koblenz* (Federal Archive Koblenz), Koblenz

GARF: *Gosudarstvenni Archiv Rossiskoi Federatsii* (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Moscow

RGVA: *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Vojennii Archiv* (Russian State War Archive), Moscow

VHA: *Vojensky Historicky Archiv* (Military Historical Archive), Prague

WAPL: *Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie* (Provincial State Archive of Lublin).

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## Notes:

- [1] D. Dwork, R. J. van Pelt, *Auschwitz 1270 to the present*. W.W. Norton & Company. New York-London, 1996, p. 254.
- [2] R. J. van Pelt, "A Site in Search of a Mission", in: Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum (authors), *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994, pp. 93-114.
- [3] In: *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1, 2002, pp. 41-69.
- [4] *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*. Da Capo, New York, 1996, p. 124. German text: *Kommandant in Auschwitz. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen des Rudolf Höss*. Edited by Martin Broszat. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich, 1981, pp. 98-99.
- [5] J.E. Schulte, "Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42", op. cit., p. 41.
- [6] GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 28.
- [7] F. Piper, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte des KL Auschwitz", in: Wacław Długoborski, Franciszek Piper (authors), *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*. Verlag des Staatlichen Museums Auschwitz-Birkenau. Oświęcim, 1999, vol. I, p. 68.
- [8] F. Piper, "Die Vernichtungsmethoden", in: *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*, op. cit., vol. III, p. 170.
- [9] The complete name was "Sonderbauleitung für die Errichtung eines Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS in Auschwitz O.S"., "Sonderbauleitung for the construction of a Waffen-SS POW camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia",
- [10] J. Sehn, "Obóz koncentracyjny i zagłady Oświęcim" (Auschwitz Concentration and Extermination Camp), in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*. Poznań, 1946, p. 70.
- [11] F. Piper, "Die Vernichtungsmethoden", in: *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*, op. cit., vol. III, p. 171.
- [12] RGVA, 502-1-314, pp. 8-8a.
- [13] F. Piper, "Die Vernichtungsmethoden", in: *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*, op. cit., vol. III, p. 172.

- [14] Originally, the crematorium was to have been built in Auschwitz camp, beside the old crematorium. When the location was shifted to Birkenau, the underground morgues were to be raised due to the high water table and became semi-underground. This implied the redesign of the initial plans, dating back to October-November 1941.
- [15] Drawing 936 dated 15 January 1941, in: J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and operation of the gas chambers*. The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York, 1989, pp. 268-269.
- [16] RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 24.
- [17] J.E. Schulte, "Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42", op. cit., p. 42.
- [18] PS-660, p. 16.
- [19] Underlined in the original.
- [20] PS-660, p. 18.
- [21] The *Wasserpolen* (literally, "Water Poles"), also known as Lechs (*Lechen*), lived in Upper Silesia.
- [22] PS-660, pp. 24-25.
- [23] In consequence of the anticipated transfer of 6,636,000 Poles resident in the Polish territories annexed by Germany.
- [24] PS-660, p. 25.
- [25] *ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
- [26] To carry out this order, which had already been issued by Hitler by decree of 7 October 1939, Himmler instituted an "RKF Office" (*Dienststelle RKF [Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums]*) directed by *SS-Oberführer Ulrich Greifelt*, which in June 1941 was transformed into the "*RKF-Stabshauptamt*" (Central RKF Command Office).
- [27] NO-3031.
- [28] J.E. Schulte, "Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42", op. cit., p. 44.
- [29] NO-385.
- [30] J.E. Schulte, "Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42", op. cit., p. 48.

- [31] See, in this regard, J. Graf, C. Mattogno, *Concentration camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, 2003, pp. 20-24 and document 2 on p. 256.
- [32] APMM, *Zentralbauleitung*, 120, p. 8.
- [33] APMM, 120, p. 11.
- [34] Letter from the head of the *Zentralbauleitung* of Lublin to Globocnik dated 27 January 1942. WAPL, 168, p. 3. *Erläuterungsbericht mit Kostenaufstellung über den Bau eines Durchgangsnachschublagers für den Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer Rußland Süd in Lublin*. WAPL, 168, pp. 10-11.
- [35] *Übergabe-Verhandlung dello Hauptnachschublager* (main resupply camp). WAPL, 168, p. 23.
- [36] WAPL, 54, p. 13.
- [37] *Erläuterungsbericht zum Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S. und Kostenvoranschlag für den Vorentwurf den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS Auschwitz O.S.* RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 14,15 and 22.
- [38] RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 11.
- [39] Plans published by J.-C. Pressac in *Auschwitz: Technique and operation of the gas chambers*, op. cit., pp. 185-186.
- [40] *ibid.*, p. 189.
- [41] *ibid.*, p. 195.
- [42] *ibid.*, p. 203.
- [43] The Auschwitz *Bauleitung* was renamed *Zentralbauleitung* on 14 November 1941. [*Zentral-Bauleitung* was a promotion]
- [44] GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 32
- [45] *Bauwerk*, abbreviated as BW, worksite or building site or set of construction projects of the same type.
- [46] *Bevollmächtigte für den Holzbau*.
- [47] GARF, 7021-108-32, pp. 34-35.
- [48] J.Graf, C. Mattogno, *Concentration camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study*, op. cit., document 3 on p. 257.

- [49] GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 37.
- [50] GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 41.
- [51] Facsimile of the document in: *Stutthof. Das Konzentrationslager. Wydawnictwo "Marpress"*. Gdańsk, 1996, unnumbered pages.
- [52] J.E. Schulte, „*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*“, op. cit., p. 53.
- [53] Jerzy Brandhuber, „Die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz“, in: *Hefte von Auschwitz. Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu*, 4, 1961, pp. 32-35.
- [54] J.E. Schulte, „*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*“, op. cit., p. 56.
- [55] *Durchgangstraße IV*, or Dg IV, was to run from Galicia to the Western Ukraine.
- [56] J.E. Schulte, „*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*“, op. cit., p. 59.
- [57] *ibid.*, pp. 57-58.
- [58] Literally: “road building”.
- [59] NG-2586-G, p. 8 of the original.
- [60] G. Aly, „*Endlösung. Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*. S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1995,, pp. 275-276.
- [61] PS-1029.
- [62] *ibid.*, p. 59. NO-500.
- [63] *ibid.*, p. 60.
- [64] T-1078.
- [65] RF-1216.
- [66] D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*. Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1989, dates indicated.
- [67] J.E. Schulte, „*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*“, op. cit., pp. 65-66.
- [68] *ibid.*, p. 67.

- [69] *ibid.*, p. 66.
- [70] *ibid.*, p. 65.
- [71] *ibid.*, p. 64, note 120.
- [72] Text in: Hans Buchheim, Martin Broszat, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Helmut Krausnik, *Anatomie des SS-Staates*. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Monaco, 1982, vol. 2, pp. 218-220.
- [73] PS-502.
- [74] *Erziehungshäftlinge*, inmates in protective custody for re-education purposes.
- [75] GARF , 7021-108-47, p. 5.
- [76] This document has not been found.
- [77] GARF , 7021-108-47, p. 5a.
- [78] Sworn declaration by K. Smoleń, Cracow, 15 December 1947. NO-5849. See also D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*, op. cit., p. 137.
- [79] *Auschwitz: la prima gasation*. Editions di Ar, Padova, 1992, p. 159. Supplemented American edition: *Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, 2005.
- [80] *Les crématoires d'Auschwitz. La machinerie du meurtre de masse*. CNRS Editions, Parigi, 1993, p. 34. Italian translation: *Le macchine dello sterminio. Auschwitz 1941-1945*. Feltrinelli, Milano, 1994, p. 44.
- [81] C. Mattogno, *Auschwitz: the First Gassing. Rumor and Reality*, op. cit.
- [82] See my study *Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassings*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, 2005.
- [83] Sworn declaration by K. Smoleń, Cracow, 15 December 1947. NO-5849.
- [84] J.E. Schulte, „*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*“, op. cit., p. 64.
- [85] *ibid.*, p. 64, note 120.
- [86] *ibid.*, p. 65.
- [87] See, in this regard, my study *Bełżec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research, and History*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2004

; *Bełżec nella propaganda, nelle testimonianze, nelle indagini archeologiche e nella storia*. Effepi, Genoa, 2006 and *Il campo di Chetmno tra storia e propaganda*, soon to be published Effepi, Genova, 2009

- [88] Dęblin is located approximately 76 km north-west of Lublin (in the direction of Warsaw), Trawniki approximately 35 km east of Lublin and approximately 13 km east of Piaski.
- [89] *Faschismus-Getto-Massenmord. Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges*. Röderberg-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1960, pp. 269-270. Cfr. *Bełżec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research, and History* *Bełżec nella propaganda, nelle testimonianze, nelle indagini archeologiche e nella storia*, op. cit., pp. 32-33.103-104.
- [90] In this regard, see my study *The Bunkers of Auschwitz. Black Propaganda versus History*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, 2004.
- [91] E. Schulte, „*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*“, op. cit., p. 64.
- [92] *ibid*, p. 67.
- [93] Starting on 5 August for the Jewish transports from France.
- [94] See my study *Sonderbehandlung“ ad Auschwitz. Genesi e significato*. Editions di Ar, Padua, 2001, pp. 33-43.
- [95] Irena is a suburb of Dęblin.
- [96] Serge Klarsfeld and Maxime Steinberg, *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de Belgique*. The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York, 1994, pp. 42-45.
- [97] E. Schulte, „*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*“, op. cit., p. 67.
- [98] In this regard, see my study *Sonderbehandlung“ ad Auschwitz. Genesi e significato*, op. cit., “*La visita di Himmler ad Auschwitz*”, pp. 18-29 *Special Treatment in Auschwitz. Origin and Meaning of a Term*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2004, pp. 17-25 and related sources.
- [99] M.T. Allen, „*Anfänge der Menschenvernichtung in Auschwitz, Oktober 1941. Eine Erwiderung auf Jan Erik Schulte*“, in: *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 4/2003, pp. 565-572.
- [100] E. Schulte, "*Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42*", op. cit., p. 69.

- [101]           ibid.
- [102]           ibid., p. 68.
- [103]           *Faschismus – Getto – Massenmord*. Röderberg-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1960, p. 303.
- [104]           E. Schulte, "Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42", op. cit., p. 68.
- [105]           ibid.
- [106]           ibid, p. 68, note 144.
- [107]           „Der Generalplan Ost“, in: *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1958, 3, p. 292.
- [108]           This designation remained in effect until 31 March 1944, when the camp was called "Lager II Birkenau". Note for Kirschneck files dated 31 March 1944. AGK, NTN, 94, p. 60.
- [109]           *Vorhaben: Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz (Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung)*. VHA, OT31(2)/8.
- [110]           *Geschäftsverteilungsplan der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz und der unterstellten Bauleitungen*. RGVA, 502-1-57, p. 316.
- [111]           Flow chart of the *Zentralbauleitung* relating to the essential personnel for the activity of the individual *Bauleitungen*. RGVA, 502-1-57, p.310.
- [112]           *Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers Auschwitz O.S.* VHA, OT31(2)/8.
- [113]           The week is calculated as 6 days: 6 x 50 x 350 = 105,000 working days.
- [114]           GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 43.
- [115]           Report from Pohl to Himmler dated 16 September 1942 with subject: a) "Rüstungsarbeiten. b) Bombenschäden". BAK, NS 19/14, pp. 131-133.
- [116]           *Aktenvermerk* of 22 May 1943. 502-1-26, p. 85.
- [117]           " *Sonderbehandlung*" *ad Auschwitz. Genesi e significato, Special Treatment in Auschwitz. Origin and Meaning of a Term*, op. cit., 56-59. 66-71.
- [118]           *Aktenvermerk* of Jothann dated 5 October 1943. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 77.
- [119]           For a more in-depth examination of the question, please see my study "The Morgues of the Crematoria at Birkenau in the Light of Documents", in: *The Revisionist*, Vol. 2, No. 3, August 2004, pp. 271-294.



- [120] *Bericht über die Arbeitseinteilung beim Sofortprogramm im K.G.L. Auschwitz* by Bischoff, dated 13 May 1943. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 338.
- [121] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 40.
- [122] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 311.
- [123] RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 8.
- [124] RGVA, 502-2-54, pp. 77-78.
- [125] See in this regard, my study, already cited, "The Morgues of the Crematoria at Birkenau in the Light of Documents", II, The Use of the Morgues of the Crematoria at Birkenau in 1943-1944, in: *The Revisionist*, Vol. 2, No. 3, August 2004, pp. 279-283.
- [126] Letter of the *SS-Standortarzt* to the commandant of KL Auschwitz of 20 March 1943 with subject "*Häftlings-Krankenbau – KGL*". RGVA, 502-1-261, p. 112.
- [127] Letter from the *SS-Standortarzt* to the *SS-Standortälteste* of 25 May 1944 with object „*Bau von Leichenkammern im KL Auschwitz II*". RGVA, 502-1-170, p. 264.
- [128] J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and operation of the gas chambers*, op. cit., p. 512.
- [129] *Häftlingsrevier im Bauabschnitt "3" des K.G.L. Lageplan des männlichen Teils*. RGVA, 502-2-110, illegible page number.
- [130] RGVA, 502-1-79, p. 100.
- [131] *Bericht über den Fortgang der Arbeiten für die Sondermassnahmen im KGL. und im Stammlager* drawn up by Bischoff on 13 July 1943. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 119.
- [132] *Bericht über den Fortgang der Arbeiten für die Sondermassnahmen im KGL. und im Stammlager* drawn up by Bischoff on 31 July 1943. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 100.
- [133] *Erläuterungsbericht zum Ausbau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS in Auschwitz/OS*. RGVA, 502-2-60, p. 81.
- [134] *Bericht über den Fortgang der Arbeiten für die Sondermassnahmen im KGL. und im Stammlager* drawn up by Bischoff il 25 settembre 1943. RGVA, 502-1-83, pp. 215-216.
- [135] Bischoff was promoted to head of the *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei "Schlesien"*.
- [136] *Kostenvoranschlag zum Ausbau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS in Auschwitz*. RGVA, 502-2-60, pp. 86-87.
- [137] *Bericht über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten für die Sondermassnahmen im KGL*, drawn up by Jothann on 30 October 1943. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 198.

- [138] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 158.
- [139] Letter from Bischoff to Jothann dated 31 March 1944. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 34.
- [140] Typographical error for May 15, 1943.
- [141] Probable typing mistake: should be 47.
- [142] RGVA, 502-2-110, pp. 1-1a.
- [143] RGVA 502-1-261, p. 117.
- [144] RGVA, 502-1.281, p. 47.
- [145] RGVA, 502-1-281, page number illegible.
- [146] Aerial photograph of Birkenau dated 31 May 1944. National Archives, Washington D.C., Mission 60 PRS/462 60SQ, Can D 1508, Exposure 3056.
- [147] *Fernschreiben* from the head of the *Amt C* of the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt of the Zentralbauleitung* dated 2 June 1944. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 5. Letter from Jothann to the *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei "Schlesien"* dated 2 June 1944. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 3.
- [148] Report on *KGL-Bauabschnitt III* drawn up on 16 June 1944 by „*Der Hygeniker der Bauinspektion „Schlesien“*“. RGVA, 502-1-168, pp. 6-6a.
- [149] C. Mattogno, „I detenuti trasferiti da Auschwitz-Birkenau nel 1944-1945“, in: *Auschwitz: trasferimenti e finte gasationis*. Effepi, Genova 2004, p. 6.
- [150] *La deportation degli Jews Ebrei ungheresi nel maggio-Julyluglio 1944*. Effepi, Genoa, 2007, pp. 31-35.
- [151] RGVA, 502-1-261, pp. 115-115a.
- [152] “Gassing” in the text.
- [153] J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and operation of the gas chambers*, op. cit., p. 512.

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